



## **Higher Education and Employment Advancement**

### **HB 5300 An Act Requiring Legislative Approval for the Merger or Closing of Institutions Within the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities and Prohibiting the Consolidation of the Regional Community-Technical Colleges**

Good afternoon, Chairman Elliott, Chairman Slap, ranking members and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement committee. My name is Zak Leavy and I am a legislative and political associate director for AFSCME Council 4, a union representing 30,000 public and private employees across Connecticut.

I am submitting testimony in support of HB 5300, An Act Requiring Legislative Approval for the Merger or Closing of Institutions Within the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities and Prohibiting the Consolidation of the Regional Community-Technical Colleges.

HB 5300 would change it so that the Board of Regents would require a two-thirds vote to make a recommendation about the closure or merger of institutions within the Connecticut State University System. It would then require a majority vote of both chambers in the legislature in order to finalize any closures or mergers.

Council 4 supports HB 5300 and that it would prevent the Board of Regents from unilaterally closing institutions. Even though the BOR has operational control of Connecticut's CSUS it is an appointed body and not responsible to the public that their decision would impact. Closure or mergers of campuses or institutions would greatly impact students, employees, and the communities where they are located. The General Assembly should retain oversight of any closures so the impact can be fully vetted by elected officials.

HB 5300 would also prevent the continuation of the consolidation of the regional-community colleges. Council 4 supports stopping this plan from moving forward and urge the committee to approve this legislation. It is time that we invest and protect our higher education institutions so we can continue providing top-level services to students in our state.